

44 University of California Publications in Am. Arch. and Ethn.

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Branca (pl. 1, a) the Krahô' had a similar hut, which stood about three hundred meters behind the circle of houses.

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Several Indians engaged in pig breeding had erected well-built roofs 2 m. square under which the beasts could sleep in bad weather if they so chose; they were not forcibly enclosed there. The tame taitetú pigs always used for ceremonial slaughter at certain festivities are kept in cages 1 m. high, which the owners generally put up in front of their houses, at the inner margin of the boulevard. A cage consists of upright poles roofed with palm fronds.

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The few Indians who raise fowls keep them behind the dwelling in little gable roofs resting directly on the ground and constructed of poles, pieces of bark, and old mats. At night they are barred with pieces of wood. The structure, like the poultry itself, was borrowed from the Neobrazilians.

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The exceptional little stall for strangers which the Apá'nyekra put up in Porquinhos has been mentioned (p. 40). No Timbira tribe has a men's or bachelors' house corresponding to the wará of the Akwê-Serente.<sup>2</sup> Meetings are held in the plaza outdoors, which is also the general sleeping place of the young men.

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Away from the village the Rãmkô'kamekra, so far as they require any form of shelter, erect the following forms of hut. If the cultivated plots are far away, a hut is put up for the period that requires the owners' presence. Such a structure is not erected in the plantation itself, but in the steppe in front of the *galeris* forest. Usually it is rectangular and gable-roofed, smaller and less massive than the fixed dwellings. However, occasionally the old beehive type (*ilêré yiróno*) occurs—a hemispherical form about 1.80 m. in height inside. The framework consists of eight or more thin trunks stuck into the ground in a circle and bent together at the top, the branches being interlaced into walls, or—rarely—tied together. There are no special horizontal hoops. This skeleton is covered round about with palm fronds, their tips up, their ribs in vertical position; other fronds are laid on top crisscross. This shelter, if carefully set up, is altogether rainproof except for some leakage at the bottom. On one side there is left an entrance 1½ m. in height.

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Similar, but as a rule less carefully built, are the huts of temporary encampments, such as all the steppe Timbira erect when large companies of them are hunting or away for some special task. In that case the arrangement of the huts is uniformly circular, all doors facing the center, and the female owners observe the same order that prevails in the village. These huts are made exclusively by the women; even men who camp beyond the settlement without their families never erect such structures (pl. 7, a).

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The question now arises: Did the Timbira originally have only such beehive huts or did they have larger, substantial dwellings in their fixed villages? Several facts support the latter alternative. The beehive huts cannot accommodate either the regular platform beds or the elevated compartments of the young girls, or an extended family. Further, it would be impossible to shelter the boys in a single house on the east or west side during the first stage of initiation, for even in 1930 there were twice sixteen novices among the Rãmkô'kamekra, and the number was doubtless larger in former times. It would be equally impossible to put up a special cell in a beehive hut for one or more boys at the terminal phase of initiation. Moreover, a beehive hut could not serve as the meeting place of any of the festive societies, with their membership ranging from 15 to 30; and to an even greater extent does the *vy'tê'* institution (p. 92) require large houses, for in 1933 the number of men who assembled was 54 and 57, respectively. I am convinced that if all these cere-

<sup>2</sup> Nimuendaju and Lowie, 408.

## Nimnendajé: The Eastern Timbira

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Hunting methods.—Traps are remarkably rare among the Timbira. The Ramkô'kamekra trap doves with an elastic beam, while boys kill them with automatic bow shots set near their houses. Today men limit themselves to spring-guns when killing deer, pacas, agoutis, etc., by an automatic release; formerly they, too, employed bows and arrows. The nooses for snaring dwarf parrots have been mentioned above (pl. 17, a, b). Among the Krahô' I saw two deadfalls of the Mundé type current among Tupi tribes.<sup>22</sup> Like the pyramidal bird traps of horizontal sticks occasionally made by boys, they are evidently derived from Neobrazilians.

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Except for the above-mentioned surrounding drive with the aid of fire, the Indians—even when setting out in considerable parties—hunt only singly or in pairs, whether stalking the game or lying in wait at a fixed station. Like the Apinayé, the Eastern Timbira rarely hunt with their dogs, numerous as these are; since their masters do not know how to train them they are of little use in the chase. This slight utilization of the dog supports its post-Columbian derivation. However, it certainly reached the Timbira soon after the discovery, probably through intermediary tribes between them and the coast, for they do not consider the dog an item obtained from civilized people. The Kréyé of Bacabal and the Ramkô'kamekra concur in the view that they obtained dogs by stealing and raising the pups of wild dogs; presumably they have in mind the Brazilian "forest dog" (*Speothos venaticus*). However, the Pukôbye, Kre'pu'mkatye, and Kréyé of Bacabal call the species éq (steppe fox [*Canis brasiliensis*]), while the Apa'nyekra, Kénkatye, Ramkô'kamekra, and the Pôrekamekra equivalent is rop (jaguar), which corresponds to Apinayé, Northern and Southern Kayapó practice.

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Deer are most commonly hunted from a fixed station in the branches of a tree above the feeding ground of the quarry when in search of fallen blossoms or fruit. The hunter sits on a few transverse poles, waiting for his victim invariably at night. The same method is extended to pacas and agoutis.

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The report of a herd of wild pigs at once sets all the hunters of the village to work. They try to sneak up from behind or, for once using their dogs, drive the pigs to bay so that they can be shot or clubbed to death. The only lance I ever saw among the Timbira I obtained from the Krikati, who used it for hunting pigs; it was a simple pole pointed at one end.

Anteaters, which are easily overtaken in running, are knocked down with clubs. The Timbira are not repelled overmuch by the fantastic stench of the skunk. Even after it is roasted, it retains a disagreeable odor, despite the tenderness and fatness of the flesh, but this is expressing my personal reaction, not that of the Timbira. An armadillo caught on the steppe before it is able to escape into its burrow is killed, as noted by Snethlage, by crushing its skull with a club or any hard object. But if the beast manages to flee into its burrow, it must be dug out at the expense of much labor, which, however, no Timbira begrudges, even if he is obliged to keep digging till he himself vanishes in the pit, as I have actually witnessed. None of these Indians could bring himself to pass an armadillo burrow without probing whether the animal is inside; and if that is ascertained, the digging starts at once, commonly with nothing but a stick hastily hacked into shape.

The stalker of a pampa ostrich masks himself with a disguise of palm grass hanging downward from the forehead and neck; or the hunter approaches after quickly painting himself with black stripes, the pigment being provided by the omnipresent charcoal remaining from steppe fires. During the dry season he lies in wait in a special hut, kwék, near the watering place of the ostriches. The sariema is easily

<sup>22</sup> Nordenskiöld, *Ethnography*, 3:67, fig. 14.

224 killed, but sought only for lack of all other game. Because of its <sup>1</sup>reputed destruction  
[23] of snakes the people like to keep it tame in the village. Though I have never observed  
these birds at this, a tame specimen once gave me a demonstration of its procedure  
when mistaking my leather belt, which had accidentally dropped, for a snake.  
Furiously pouncing on the strap, the sariema seized the buckle with its bill, swung  
it in the air, and lashed it two or three times against the ground in a manner that  
would inevitably have cracked a snake's spine. Only then did the attacker recognise  
223 its error and let the belt alone. Falcons are killed in large numbers when the steppe  
grass is burnt in June and these birds immediately foregather in order to hunt the  
startled grasshoppers, lizards, and other small species. Falcons are sought both for  
their flesh and their downy feathers, which play a great part in Eastern Timbira  
ceremonial.

224 Snakes are killed with any handy stick, except that a *sucuriçu*, which has the  
thickness of a human thigh, requires a sizable club.

483 Game of agouti size, or larger, is carried home in a palm-leaf basket plaited  
ad hoc. First the hunter plaits the back of the container, deposits the animal on it,  
and then interlaces the leaflets over it. The tip of a monkey's tail is pulled through  
its lower jaw and the game is then hung over's one shoulder. A man will tie together  
a deer's feet, put his head through the ring thus formed, and carry his kill home  
on his back.

462 The *Ramkô'kamekra*, too, as noted by Snethlage,<sup>2</sup> drags large game no farther  
than the village boundary, whence his wife carries it home.

224 In general the Timbira are still skillful at hunting, exhibiting marked ability to  
581 interpret footprints and great perseverance in pursuing wounded animals. A good  
hunter is prized all the more nowadays because lack of game renders the chase pro-  
gressively less productive. He is a much coveted husband: I once overheard a *Ram-  
kô'kamekra* reproving his infatuated niece as follows, "You want to marry him?  
What sort of game has he ever shot?"

224 Collective hunting accompanies the festivals, especially the period preceding the  
527 terminal celebration, which always requires a large quantity of meat pies. Since  
561 this closing ceremony is determined by the council when the duration of the festival  
is deemed sufficient, this decision likewise involves the signal for collective hunting.  
This devolves exclusively on the festive societies and age classes that participated in  
the festival. Each group is accompanied by the two associated girl auxiliaries, who  
are sometimes joined by several female age mates, especially of the "wanton" class.  
At least one man of more mature age invariably goes along in order to advise  
the younger people and to see to the preservation of ceremonial rules. He has  
the prerogative of eating the brains of animals killed, this diet being tabooed to the  
young people. The oldest woman of the society—contrary to Snethlage's observa-  
tion—does not dream of permitting herself to be loaded down with kitchen utensils  
[887] to be brought to the hunters' assembly. Old women calmly wait in the village for  
whatever food their sons or sons-in-law are morally obliged to bring them. I am  
further puzzled by the function of the cords and ropes (both of tucum fiber) with  
which, according to the same investigator, every hunter provides himself.

224 In the collective hunting trips, too, the *tamhã'k* (p. 98) play a part, attempting  
791 to increase the yield of the undertaking by first performing certain actions. Indeed,  
they even tried to improve the quality of the slain game by their magical influence.  
If animals were to be surrounded with the aid of firing, a *tamhã'k* had to be the first  
to light the fire. He and his fellows, however, did not take part in the ensuing drive.

<sup>2</sup> *Mejorillo*, 465.

1 [i.e. the sariema - - - Analyst]

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No sooner had the two age classes in the plaza caught sight of them than they ran shouting toward them, hurling burity staves 1 m. long at them; then they retreated to the plaza again. The girls divided their numbers along three of the radial paths and in their turn took the offensive with a volley of babamu and other nuts. They pounced upon the men, grappled with them, and tried to throw them. There ensued general wrestling bouts, lasting for only a few seconds and closing with the men's victory. Only one girl, Kentapi, bowled over her adversary. Now the two factions separated and formed two lines facing each other. Several men offered the girls the fruits they had employed in pelting. In this position they sang for a while, then suddenly united, and turned westward, yelling defiance in chorus at their western neighbors, the Apa'nyekra. Thus ended this ceremony, whose name I was unable to ascertain. It was simply designated as amnyikapë're (amnyi= reciprocal; kapë're, throwing).

## DOMESTIC ANIMALS

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I strongly suspect the Timbira of having originally lacked dogs—in other words, any domestic animals. Nowadays every Ponto household has at least two dogs. The breed is mostly characterized by medium size and short hair, a pointed snout, and large erect ears with projecting tips. They are not badly treated, generally receiving some food after the owners' meal. Special attention is devoted to pregnant and suckling bitches; when they are about to give birth, their owners sometimes rig up old mats into a regular confinement cell for them in a corner of the house. Good hunting dogs are rare; nor are their animals particularly violent or given to biting even though they dutifully yelp at every stranger. Since they are hardly ever beaten, they are insolent and forward toward their masters. I have often admired the patience of many an Indian, who while at his meal would again and again push away his importunate dogs with a cautious movement of his hand as though he were dealing with a child. When hard put to it, a native will threaten the dog with a stick, which, however, almost always is deliberately made to strike the ground beside the beast. As stated, some dogs sleep on the platform beds with their masters. When a dog dies, it is buried like a human being, in a pit the mouth of which is covered, and earth is heaped on top.

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At present all steppe Timbira breed pigs and fowls, even though only in small numbers—especially our Canella, whose village harbored some forty pigs (1933) and twelve horses, to boot. They like very much to handle horses and rapidly learn to become good riders. The Krikatí were the only one of these tribes that formerly owned a few head of cattle. Very few Timbira keep poultry, and in Ponto there were only two cats. Even today a fair number of Ponto Indians have no animals except dogs. However, Fróes Abreu goes somewhat too far in mentioning as their only true domestic beasts "several sucking pigs."<sup>100</sup> Most of the animals, even some of the horses, belong to the women.

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Among the merely tamed pets from the forest and steppes the peccaries (usually *Dicotyles labiatus*) play the major role. They are caught young and grow very tame, but must generally be kept in cages to guard against constant brawls with the dogs. The peccaries receive the names of human beings. At the terminal solemnity of certain major festivals (e.g., the two phases of initiation and pepkaha'k) a peccary must be ceremonially killed, made into meat pies, and paid for. The inmates of the house loudly bewail its death, while no particular fuss accompanies the slaughtering of a domestic pig.

<sup>100</sup> Fróes Abreu, Terra das Palmeiras, 178.

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Usually one may also see all sorts of other wild animals that have been raised in villages from infancy. Fróes Abreu mentions young steppe foxes, and I have also seen anteaters, coatis, deer, and monkeys. The favorite bird pets are young parrots, which freely fly about the village; after sunrise they keep up lively conversations on the roofs, laughing and singing dance songs. As previously noted, the Canella like to keep sariemas as guards against intruding snakes from the steppe. Only in case of necessity are tamed animals tied up—perhaps most commonly the coatis because their monkey-like climbing prevents security from their ever-prying noses. I recall no instance in which animals were treated capriciously or brutally.

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